



## *A Lot of Changes for the Southwest Region*

*by Sergeant Wayne Bensfield  
Phoenix Police Department*

**T**he Phoenix Police Department's G.R.E.A.T. National Training Team has undergone major changes during the last few months. With most police departments, there come times when old familiar names and faces are replaced by new ones. The same is true with the Southwest Region. We would like to take a moment to say good-bye to those National Training Team members who have moved on to accept new responsibilities or explore new possibilities in their lives.

**Officer Peter Baker** transferred to the General Investigations Bureau as a Detective for the administrative staff.

**Ms. Lisa Coombe** transferred to the Community Relations Bureau as a secretary.

**Mr. Marty Dangel** resigned to make a career change.

**Officer Paul Ellis** transferred to the local G.R.E.A.T. Unit and is instructing the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum to students in Phoenix area schools.

As of December 30, 1998, the following members of the National Training Team retired from the Department:

**Sergeant Larry Derocher** retired to become a chaplain with the Law Enforcement Ministries in Phoenix, Arizona.

**Officer Doug Cassidy** retired to become a Program Manager for the Drug Enforcement Bureau administrative staff.

Also retiring was **Lieutenant Mike Nikolin**, who had served on the National Training Committee since 1997. He left to become more actively involved in the daily operations of the Phoenix Police Department Museum.

During this period of change, **Phoenix Police Officer Ron Jakola** has remained a member of the National Training Team, assigned to the Southwest Regional Training Site in Phoenix, Arizona. Officer Jakola has extensively assisted the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms with trainings by traveling around the country to other Regional Training Sites offering his expertise and assistance in numerous trainings.

We have a few new faces as well. On March 1, 1999, the Southwest Regional Training Site added **Phoenix Police Sergeant Wayne Bensfield** as the Regional Training Administrator and **Kathy Hutchinson** as the Administrative Aide. Sergeant Bensfield is also serving on the G.R.E.A.T. National Working Committee. In addition, **Lieutenant Deb Smoot** has been assigned to represent the Southwest Region as a voting member on the G.R.E.A.T. National Training Committee.

Please join us as we bid a fond farewell to those who have served the National Training Team so well in the past and a warm welcome to the new members who have decided to accept a G.R.E.A.T. challenge. Even with the changes, it will be business as usual. The Southwest Regional Training Site is currently preparing for several upcoming GOT's through September.

If you have any questions or need assistance from any of the Southwest Regional Personnel, you can contact us at 1-800-244-7328 or 602-495-0431. Our e-mail address is [www.great@cybervault.com](mailto:www.great@cybervault.com). ~

### ***YOUR ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED!!!***

As part of their ongoing National Evaluation, researchers from the University of Nebraska at Omaha will be sending all G.R.E.A.T.-trained officers a questionnaire during the summer of 1999. Please complete the questionnaire and return it to them. The information they are collecting will be of value not only to the evaluation but also to the G.R.E.A.T. Program.



# The District of Columbia Hosts Summer Games

by Officer Sylvester Garvin Jr.  
G.R.E.A.T. Coordinator, Washington, D.C.

**J**une 20, 1998, the G.R.E.A.T. youths and parents in Washington, D.C., had a G.R.E.A.T. ACKNOWLEDGMENT DAY, the first ever in the city, held on the ball field at Taft Junior High School. Numerous events started off what was to be a G.R.E.A.T. summer with displays and demonstrations by the City Police K-9 Unit, the Fire Department, and the U.S. Park Police horse and helicopter units. The D.C. police band known as "Side by Side"—made up of G.R.E.A.T. officers—also played for everyone.

City government representatives from the various voting districts started the day with speeches promoting the program and praising the hard work of both the officers and their students. There was plenty of food and fun ending with the A.W.A.N.A. Games. Ten bikes were given away to the winning teams each consisting of five boys and five girls.

It was all a fantastic success that led into our 5 week SUMMER CAMP. The youths participated in numerous educational activities and field trips such as going to see the Statue of Liberty, Colonial Williamsburg, the Police Academy, and the U.S. Superior Court. The students were very enthusiastic about the camp and say they are looking forward to it again in 1999.

Officers Cheryl Crawley, Sylvester Garvin Jr., Greg Gibson Bruce Murray, Chris Smith, Lynette Sweetwine and Supervisors Lieutenant John Alter and Sergeant Barbara Hawkins worked many long hours to make all of this happen for the children of their community. The success of their efforts can be easily seen in the positive new relationship that has developed between their students and the local police. ~





*“Surrounded by Gems” continued from page 4*

the most laps around the center was a big old bowling trophy—once we surgically removed the bowling ball from the hand of the figurine, it very much resembled a runner.

After the physical activities we had lunch provided by the Federal Government Subsidized School Lunch Program. Following lunch, the students were able to participate in a number of structured supervised activities. They played board games such as checkers, chess, pick-up sticks, scrabble, dominoes, etc. Some jumped rope while others played basketball games routinely officiated by site officers.

Our newest G.R.E.A.T. Officer, Stephanie Velazquez, demonstrated some of her talents by designing tee-shirts for students using fabric paint. She also organized a cheerleading squad into a community service project. As a participant in the running club, she became aware of an elderly gentleman, who was bed ridden and living across the street from the center. After obtaining the approval of the visiting nurse and the patient, she took her cheerleading squad to the front of his house to perform. Since his bed was located on the ground floor next to the window, he was able to look out and see their performance. Many residents of the neighborhood came out to see what all the commotion was about. After observing many nods of approval and a rousing round of applause, we knew the community was supportive of her efforts. We take our collective hats off to Stephanie for sharing her skills and making a difference in the lives of so many young people.


Officer Elmira Williams, our veteran G.R.E.A.T. Officer, who served in the capacity of site leader at our West Philadelphia Center, organized our annual bake sale and flea market. After a lesson on responsibility, she assigned each camper an item to bring on the day of our sale. She then had the campers take an active role in organizing and selling the bake goods. She asked the campers what they wanted to purchase for their center from the proceeds. She was able to procure various games, fans and the services of a carpenter to make some much needed tables. All of these items were donated to the center at the completion of your summer component. We appreciated all the efforts of our parents, students, and Officer Williams in this worthwhile community service project.

Following our free time activities, we took our afternoon attendance and discussed current events. We informed the students of news on the international, national, state, city, and—most important—the local scene. One particular article reported a drive by shooting which occurred at the northwest corner of our site, during the evening hours. This presented

the campers an opportunity to ventilate their personal feelings concerning the loss of family members and friends due to violence.

After our news and views discussions, we got the campers up and moving again. This was accomplished by our G.R.E.A.T. Game Master, Officer Warren Harding. Many of you may know Officer Harding who is a member of the G.R.E.A.T. National Training Team and the G.R.E.A.T. Working Committee. Warren prides himself on his ability to get the most out of his campers, especially when competing in the G.R.E.A.T. Olympics. Needless to say, he strongly encourages a winning attitude on and off the court. Every day, Warren and the other staff members would play the G.R.E.A.T. games for approximately one hour. They developed team building skills, self-esteem, sportsmanship, and a “never give up” attitude that eventually permeated all the campers. Their efforts paid off once again, as the center took first place at our annual Olympic games for the fourth year in a row. There were many compliments from outside observers on how poised and confident our campers were during the games. Good job Warren.

After the games, the campers were permitted free time and a snack. Officer Ken Jacobs, the final member of our staff, provided security for our meeting room and equipment. He coordinated the lunch program with other groups that utilized the center. He possesses exceptional listening skills and was instrumental in teaching conflict-resolution skills to campers on a one to one basis. Ken's patience, intervention, and desire to teach campers appropriate methods in dealing with problem situations avoided many potential problems and confrontations.

As you can see, I was surrounded by gems. This produced a positive learning experience for all who had an opportunity to take part in our successful G.R.E.A.T. Summer Program. 







# G.R.E.A.T. Tiger Day Keeps Getting Bigger and Bigger and Bigger

by Nancy Henrietta  
Management Assistant, ATF

**A**pril 22, 1999, has been designated as G.R.E.A.T. Tiger Day in the city of Detroit, Michigan. This is the fifth year that Michigan G.R.E.A.T. kids have been guests of the Detroit Tigers baseball team to celebrate their graduation from the G.R.E.A.T. Program. However, when the G.R.E.A.T. logo flies over Tiger Stadium this year, it will be the last. Oh! We are not talking about the last Tiger G.R.E.A.T. Day, but the last G.R.E.A.T. Day in the old Tiger Stadium at Michigan & Trumbull Avenue in downtown Detroit. Next year's Tiger G.R.E.A.T. Day will be held in the **new** downtown facility that will be known as "Comerica Park."

As we look forward to this year's game, we wanted to take a look back on the origins and history of what has become known as Tiger G.R.E.A.T. Day. We thought it appropriate to review some of the highlights of past games. And in an effort to provide ideas to other G.R.E.A.T. Officers throughout the nation, we questioned ATF Special Agent John Griffith, the G.R.E.A.T. Officer responsible for founding the only G.R.E.A.T. event sponsored on an annual basis by a major league baseball team.

**Q.** John, how did it all start?

**A.** Well, after completing GOT, I started [teaching] my first classes at Brownstown Middle School. The school staff, principal, and Brownstown Police Department were so supportive of the program, and the kids were just so enthused, I felt something really G.R.E.A.T. had to mark their graduation. I started contacting sports figures known by other agents in the office, the NBA, the NFL, just to come up with a graduation speaker, a role model, someone that would impact the kids. Just when I was about to give up on community support, I contacted Celia Bobrowsky, Community Relations and Director of the "Tigers Care" Department and made a request for a speaker. Celia invited me over to the park to tell her about the G.R.E.A.T. Program. After hearing about the program, Celia suggested, instead of sending a speaker to the school, to bring all 410 G.R.E.A.T. graduates to a game. That year "Sparky" Anderson was managing, and after the game all the graduates were brought down to the seats behind the dugout where Sparky gave a wonderful talk about "team-



work” and “goal setting.” The function went off so well, that the following year, Celia suggested that we get other schools with the G.R.E.A.T. Program involved and call it “Tiger G.R.E.A.T. Day.” That year, Director Magaw [ATF] came down, made a presentation to the Tigers, and threw out the first pitch. (It was a strike!)

**Q. Has Tiger G.R.E.A.T. Day been well received?**

**A.** It sure has, from the first group of G.R.E.A.T. graduates of 410, we’ve continued to grow to the point that now we expect more that 3,000 G.R.E.A.T. graduates at the game this year, representing about 20 different communities throughout the state.

**Q. Is it hard to control that many kids?**

**A.** Well, we had to go to essay and poster contest winners [for kids who would get] to meet with the manager and players prior to the game. It got to be too many to address before the game. But, as far as “control,” I am really proud that some usher friends that I’ve known who have been at the park in excess of 30 years, have commented on how well behaved the “G.R.E.A.T.” kids are.

**Q. Is it just a day off from school for these kids, or do they get something out of going to the game?**

**A.** Oh, it’s a day off for the kids, but with having completed the extra work the G.R.E.A.T. Program requires to graduate, they have earned it! Aside from that, ATF only helps the Tigers organize the day and distribute tickets. As far as the kids are concerned, it is their G.R.E.A.T. Officer that is responsible for them being at the game, and for many of the kids, this is their first major league baseball game. That’s important because in years to come, these kids might forget about the G.R.E.A.T. Program. They might forget exactly what was in each lesson, but one thing they will keep with them the rest of their lives is the fact that a police officer was responsible for taking them to their first baseball game. That’s a memory that will have community relations benefits for police organizations for years to come. ~

## G.R.E.A.T. Bids Tom Schneider a Fond Farewell

by Nancy Henrietta

At the end of January 1999, Thomas L. Schneider, who has served as Special Agent in Charge of the G.R.E.A.T. Program Branch for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for the past 2 1/2 years, moved on to the Bureau’s Office of Inspection. Tom served the G.R.E.A.T. Program exhaustively and loyally with profound dedication.

Tom began working for G.R.E.A.T. in late 1996, where he served as a member of the National Training Committee. Under Tom’s administration, the G.R.E.A.T. Program saw many changes, such as regionalization and dramatic increases in cooperative city funds, cooperative cities, students taught and officers trained.

During the National Policy Board meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania this past January, Tom was formally presented with an inscribed captain’s clock by Director John Magaw, of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and member of the National Policy Board, in recognition for his outstanding performance. Sheriff Kevin Beary of the Orange County Sheriff’s Office and Chairman of the National Training Committee presented Tom with the Orange County’s Sheriff’s Citation Medal.

Tom’s involvement in the program will be G.R.E.A.T.ly missed.



Thomas L. Schneider



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# Why I Do

## What I Do

*by Officer Warren Harding  
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Minister for the West Oak Lane Church of God*

**A**s I look back over my experience with the G.R.E.A.T. Program, I can remember one question being asked of me during two different interviewing sessions, “Why?”

The first time was during my initial interview with Lt. Martin Taylor for a position in the Community Relation Unit of the Philadelphia Police Department. “Why do you want to come to this unit?” I told him that it was an opportunity for me to *reach back* and help some inner city child be successful and have a chance to see there is a life outside their neighborhood.

I borrowed the phrase “reach back” from an organization I volunteer with in Philadelphia, the Sonny Hill Community Involvement League. I used that phrase and continue to use it because I feel that how much money you have or the material things you have obtained should not measure success in life.

Instead, we should measure ourselves by the number of people we have helped and the sacrifices we have made for them. Our worth should be determined by the number of times a person has “reached back” to help someone move forward. As G.R.E.A.T. Officers, we have the opportunity to reach back and give children hope. We have the chance to provide them with the tools they need to break out of dangerous habits and assumptions— both the innercity kid and those in affluent neighborhoods.

You see, a lot of young people I have encountered think they are living “fabulous”. They call it “ghetto fabulous”: a nice car, good social life,

some jewelry, living with mom, and running from the law. Notice that, unfortunately, I did not list education as something our young people are interested in. Sadly, they don’t prioritize education as a necessary survival skill in their limited world. We have the opportunity to change this way of thinking, to expand their views.

I look at myself as striving to be a modern day Harriet Tubman. This American Hero, not content with her own freedom, reached back through her Underground Railroad to give hope and a path to freedom. She reached back so others could move forward. Not only did she reach back, but recognizing that she could not do all she dreamed of alone, she “reached out” to others with a like commitment, brought them together, and increased her success a hundred fold.

My opportunity to reach out came the next time I can remember being asked “Why?”— when I was asked if I would like to be a team leader. The recommendation came from Officer Rhonda Hickman, a former team leader assigned to the Phoenix Police Department, and I owe her a lot of thanks because it gave me the opportunity to reach kids I may never see. How do I do that? Through the eyes of every officer I teach in the G.R.E.A.T. Instructor’s School. It is my sincere desire that in the heart of each officer I encounter, they will take a piece of me with them.

I do what I do because through the G.R.E.A.T. Instructor’s School I’ll be able to “reach out” just as Harriet Tubman reached out so many years ago. Through the officers I teach, I’ll be able to “reach back” all across our nation and touch the lives of all the kids they encounter. I do what I do so I can reach out, reach back, and, with the help of each officer, reach out again. ~

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